

Patricia Murdo

Lead Staff

Economic Affairs Interim Committee

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RE: Committee Review of Dry Needling Rule for Physical Therapists

8/31/15

Dear Committee Members,

My name is Matthew Bauer, L.Ac., and I am President of the recently formed educational non-profit organization, the Acupuncture Now Foundation (ANF). The ANF was formed to educate the public, healthcare providers, and health policymakers about the practice of acupuncture. We are a non-partisan educational charity, not a professional association. As such, we do not engage in political lobbying or try to influence issues related to duly licensed practitioners' scope of practice (turf battles). However, the escalation of tensions and rhetoric surrounding the "dry needling issue" particularly in the U.S. but also happening to some degree in other countries has led us to believe we could offer some practical suggestions to decision making bodies such as yours for working through these matters and we thank you for the opportunity to do so.

We believe debating whether or not dry needling is acupuncture does little good in resolving the types of policy questions before states' legislatures and licensing boards and has only confused policy makers and the public. It is clear opposing sides are digging-in and legal challenges are on the rise. Unfortunately, what has not taken place is any serious effort for the differing parties to take part in an organized effort to find resolution and offer states' policy makers information gleaned from a structured, deliberative process. As such the ANF urges the Economic Affairs Interim Committee to recommend no further action be taken and a Task Force be formed to further consider this continuous issue. This Task Force should be comprised of representative from Montana State and national Acupuncture and Physical Therapy associations, appropriate state representatives, and the public. Our concern is that unless a formal deliberative process is convened, states will be subjected to many more rounds of legal and legislative efforts by both Licensed Acupuncturists and Physical Therapists to reverse policies either side sees as wrongheaded.

On a personal note, over my 30 years in practice, I have watched with regret as this issue became more and more contested. It is a shame because Licensed Acupuncturists and Physical Therapists both want the best for their patients and the public and in fact, the two disciplines clinically work very well

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together. It is unfortunate the differing leadership bodies of these two professions have never found a way to undertake thoughtful discussions to resolve these issues but rather take their cases to the media, legislatures, and the courts. This has not served the public well. Your state has an opportunity here to not only help resolve the issue before you and other states where this is being hotly debated, but to also improve the health choices for your state's citizens. The Acupuncture Now Foundation would be happy to lend any assistance we could in organizing this Task Force or to assist your committee in any way to help find resolution to this matter.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input on this matter and please feel free to contact us for any further information.

Sincerely,



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